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ABSTRACT

This paper encourages the exchange of publications between industrialized and developing countries, and discusses the following topics: financial concerns contributing to the importance of exchange, problems arising in the course of exchange efforts, misconceptions about developing countries, an international code of ethics, the conventions concerning the international exchange of publications adopted by UNESCO in 1958, the need for a national publications exchange center, a handbook and letters developed by IFLA to assist in the international exchange of publications, improving exchanges through international cultural relations, and problems facing libraries in developing countries. These problems include a serious lack of trained personnel, general communications facilities, external currency, and indigenous book trade infrastructure. (CMV)

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Exchange of Publications with Developing Countries

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Exchange of Publications with Developing Countries

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Secretary Section on Exchange of Publications

Head of the Service belge des échanges internationaux

Introduction.

I have been asked to write a paper about the exchange of publications with developing countries. My credentials for talking about this topic consist of more than fifteen years of work in the field of exchanges and especially of exchanges with developing countries since the European Conference on the international exchange of publications held in Vienna in 1972, where I delivered a paper about my experience in exchanging publications with the Republic of Zaïre.

There exist of course already a number of books, articles in journals and papers submitted to professional conferences and seminars on the exchange of publications in general and on the exchange of publications with the developing countries in particular. The scope of this paper is not to open new horizons, but to submit some suggestions to your consideration.

I have had no opportunity to conduct a survey or to send out questionnaires asking the opinions of colleagues in different countries about the possibilities, the practicalities, the situation of the exchange of publications. My paper, therefore, is based in the first place on my personal experience of many years and in the second place on the readings of articles, study and research reports and papers presented to various professional seminars and conferences.

I have tried to avoid the pitfall of becoming lost in reminiscences and in detailed descriptions of personal experiences. My aim has been to analyse problems systematically and to draw meaningful conclusions. I, however, must confess that I did not find it an easy endeavour and that I am not sure of complete success.

Importance of Exchange.

In order to prove the importance of exchange as a means of acquiring library materials I will give you some figures from three of the world's great libraries and quote three authoritative librarians.

In 1975 the Library of Congress acquired 489, 893 pieces through exchange. In 1977 the British Library got 440, 345 pieces through exchange and the figures of the Lenin State Library are respectively 60% of foreign books, 88% of Serials and 82% of periodicals. In my own Library approximatively 40% of the total acquisitions are made by exchange.

A glance at these figures shows clearly that however limited it ought to be in theory, in practice exchange takes a very big place.

G.E. Marrison of the British Library (1.) states that "acquisition by exchange is particularly important for certain categories, such as official government publications, and academic serials; and also in relation to certain countries where it proves to be the most convenient, or even the only possible method of acquiring library materials, since it overcomes the difficulties of currency control and exchange; and in some cases because all publication, even of cultural material, is done by government agencies".

Enid Bishop of the Australian National University (2.) tells us that, "although most Australian libraries seem to favour selective purchasing, exchange is a very fruitful potential source for acquiring publication; a source which has not yet been fully exploited. He found that about 75% of the Korean publications in the collections of Eastern materials in the Australian libraries were acquired by gift and exchange. For Japanese materials it turned out that exchanges are most useful for a wide range of institutional and government publications and for getting publications not for sale or not readily available through normal trade or official channels".

To end these statements, some quotations from A. Allardyce, head of Gift and Exchange and Monograph Acquisition of the British Library Lending Division, Boston Spa, U.K. (3.) "Most librarians would say that, however agreeable it is to have enough money to buy, no major and few specialised research libraries can acquire by purchase all the publications they need. So, despite the acceptance by exchange librarians that as a general rule exchange is no substitute for purchase, they remain convinced that U.A.P. will never be possible without exchange and that progress towards it will be quicker with exchange".

These quotations clearly demonstrate the importance of exchange in acquiring library materials.

No rose without its thorn.

A. Allardyce in his above-mentioned article says that pronouncements like Alexandre Vattemare's (d. 1864), an enthusiastic pioneer of international exchange, defining the aim of international exchange to be : "to place at the disposal of every nation all the sources of intellectual culture... which are produced by the most favoured of its fellows" and the declaration in the Unesco's Constitution (1948) of its commitment to : "Maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge by ... encouraging cooperation among the nations in all branches of intellectual activity including ... the exchange of publications... by initiating methods of international cooperation calculated to give people of all countries access to the printed and published materials produced by any of them" make exchange sound like a world mission. He, however, states that : "... like other roads to UAP, exchange of publications is not a broad highway, but a multitude of pathways and byways which connect individual libraries. It is not a self - contained operation but a part of one phase, the preliminary acquisition phase, of making the world's literature available to readers."

Moreover exchanges have also unsatisfactory aspects, such as a.o. : 1. the failure of some exchange partners to send serial issues regularly;

2. the difficulty in establishing satisfactory reciprocity in the exchange relationship, due to the fact that it is sometimes difficult to estimate the value of publications sent and received.

3. the limitation of libraries to meet the requests of exchange partners for trade books, owing to, as A. Allardyce pointed it out, "growing needs of their own libraries in relation to book funds shrinking in real terms and unfilled staff vacancies, caused by restrictions on public expenditure".

Exchange with developing countries.

Despite the thorns in the acquisition through exchange, I am, however, convinced that exchange between industrialized and developing countries are now more necessary than ever.

In developing countries, the demand for scientific and other kinds of publications is becoming more and more urgent, because of their desire to build up a modern economy and develop their national self - awareness.

Owing to the complexities of the social and economic conditions of developing countries, and their level of development in library services, which vary from one country to the other, it is difficult to say definitely what is practical and what is possible in the planning and the establishment of exchange programmes for the whole developing countries.

Furthermore as A. Allardyce states in his paper : "A developing country with shifting priorities as well as a great power in social and industrial revolution, may leave its libraries with little alternative to exchange for much of their foreign acquisitions. This is because national considerations favour other import priorities."

Developing countries : A Correction.

This paper is specially concerned with the problem of exchanges of publications with developing countries. I am convinced that it is interesting to speculate on the possibilities of improving the exchange of publications. But before doing so. I should like to correct a misconception. There is a tendency to regard all developing countries as being poor countries, but this is a mistake. Many are surely impoverished, and even the richer ones are often still at a relatively early age in their library development.

On the other hand we should not forget that several of the countries classified as "least developed" by the United Nations have established library services comparable in many respects with those which exist in much wealthier countries.

Let me also bring to your attention a basic problem outlined by Dudley Sears and Leonard Joy in their survey of world development problems (4): "We refer to some countries of the world as "underdeveloped" or "developing", but we must realize that these descriptions are dangerous evasions of reality. All countries are "underdeveloped" in various senses, and the most serious problem about the countries usually described as "developing" is precisely that few of them are successfully doing so."

Perhaps the most important point to be made at the beginning of this paper is that, as the Committee for Development Planning of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has pointed out (5) "while developing countries as a group face more or less the same general problems of underdevelopment, the difference between the poorest and the relatively more advanced among them is quite substantial" and "the least developed among them cannot always be excepted to benefit fully or automatically from such general measures adopted in favour of all developing countries".

Exchange : A code of Ethics.

"There no longer exist privileged centres where science is cultivated in isolation. In all countries, among all races, there are achievements of the human brain that are contributing to scientific progress.
Intelligentsia are seeking each other, they group themselves, human solidarity is steadily widening and the spirit of partnership, after having changed the world of economics, is working now new wonders in the world of the mind.

Every day in academies, scientific institutes, learned societies, special committees, literary societies, editorial committees, joint effort is creating new sources and inexhaustible manifestations of the human brain. In our times, one of the quickest ways of hastening the development of science and the onward march of progress is surely to collect these products of the human brain, centralize all the various efforts, draw up in each country an inventory of the general progress of intellectual work, place at the disposal of inquiring minds what might be called the dossier on each subject, prepared and supplemented by the specialists and the scientists from the new and the old worlds, bring them into association and, so to speak, into collaboration with each other..."

I cannot restrain from quoting this passage from the report of the Belgian International Exchange Commission to the Belgian House of Representatives on the occasion of the ratification on 19 January 1887 of the Brussels Conventions of 15 March 1886. Despite the passage of time, these words have lost none of their original significance.
They clearly state the basic rule of all exchange of publications, which must above all be based on a code of ethics, on mutual generosity.

Problems facing librarians in developing countries.

All of us are aware of the difficulties which the developing countries face in the procurement of library materials. They are well summarized by J.A.Ombu when he wrote (6): "Amongst the many problems that face librarians in the developing countries, problems relating to the acquisition of foreign materials seems to be the most acute. These problems exist mainly for three reasons : first the relatively underdeveloped economic circumstances of the developing countries within which their libraries have to function; second, the fact that book publishing is in its infancy throughout most of the area, and therefore the necessity to buy almost entirely from foreign countries; and the fact that the developing countries are far removed from the metropolitan areas of the world, where the bulk of the publishing is done".

There are, however, more problems with which developing countries have to face; problems which are obstacles often standing in the way of exchange, and even of the distribution of publications :

1. There is a <u>serious lack of trained personnel</u> in the right proportions at various levels in order to provide a satisfactory infra-structure. The problem of staff is for instance raised in the report of the Expert Meeting on National Planning of Documentation and Library Services in Africa, organized by Unesco at Kampala (Uganda) from 7 to 15 December 1970. The conclusions include recommendations to the effect

that, as regards staff training, a sufficient number of fellowships should be granted to student librarians who would be sent for training to library schools. Furthermore it was suggested to reshape the courses run at universities so as to lead to a qualification equivalent to either a first or a second degree in librarianship, according to what type of library personnel best meets the country's stated requirements.

In order to meet these requirements exchange librarians in developing countries must be imaginative, should be familiar with the basic sociological, psychological and economic realities of their countries, must determine the nature and quantity of library materials that are needed, and need to constantly improve their competency to identify, select, acquire and utilize effectively the best library materials for their readers. This of course is an idealistic view. Even allowing for the greater tempo of life today, and the rapid strides made in the developing countries, we of the so-called developed countries, may not be expecting our younger colleagues to run before they can walk. We, on the contrary, should be less concerned with the full stops and commas of bureaucracy and be more aware of the fact that the growth of a living and vital democracy in any country must, in the conditions of the modern scientific-technological world, depend on the accessibility of ideas to the whole world.

2. A second general problem, characteristic of developing countries, is <u>a basic lack of general communication facilities</u> (telephone mail services, etc). One letter I received on this subject reports that "periodicals and publications rarely reach their destination, they are either sent to another address or disappear on the way". A.J. Loveday summarized it (7); "In the development of any coordinated national scheme for acquisitions it will be important to give the due weight to the considerable difficulty which exists in most developing countries over the whole range of communications. First, postal services tend to be organized in relation to box numbers associated with institutions rather than physical locations of individual addresses and this can present problems for the individual researcher or reader in remote rural places depending upon a distant central back-up service... The postal system in the majority of cases is slow and does not support the rapid availability of photocopies between acquisition centres. Telecommunications too may be sporadic und unreliable bases for cooperative procedures. It may frequently be easier and more rapid to obtain inter-loan on an inter-continental rather than on an inter-regional or national basis".

The removal of such obstacles requires action, often on a large and expensive scale, by government authorities. We, librarians of the developed countries, can do no more, in most cases, than to draw attention to their adverse effects on library development. We surely know that cooperation in librarianship, as in

other areas, is one of the most difficult activities man can undertake, and nobody should expect. In a imperfect world there will be a gap between hope and realization. But we should not forget that it is primarily an ethical problem concerned with a professional's duty to help those less well provided for than himself. It was perhaps best expressed by T.J. Minder (8) : "the first factor of co-operation is that of individualism, or the ego. The individual member of a co-operative rightly expects some personal gain from the venture...
The second factor is attitudes or the willingness to relinquish one's personal gain for the benefits of the other participants ... The third factor is group benefits".

3. A third general problem characteristic of developing countries is that there is frequently insufficient external currency to provide the basic needs of a modern information and library service or there is such bureaucratic delay involved in the procedures of obtaining external currency that the materials required come too late or do not come at all (e.g. because they are sold out or out of print).

Here the industrialized countries can play a vital role. The monetary crisis has had repercussions on the economies of almost all countries in the world and even the governments of the industrialized countries have been led to enter upon a period of austerity in their policies. But after all the libraries in the developed countries are better developed and have richer resources and are consequently able to help their colleagues in the developing countries to obtain valuable foreign publications.

Our colleagues in the developing countries should however have in mind that, although it has certainly been accepted that the industrialized nations ought to lend their co-operation to the developing countries and promote their advancement in every way possible, it remains obvious that the remedies for development lie mainly in their hands and in the hands of their authorities themselves.

They should not forget that the progress of a nation depends chiefly on its own will to work, its spirit of initiative, and its effective determination to reach the targets it has set itself.

Finally efficient, continuous co-operation from outside cannot be found, indeed cannot be requested of the international community, which is to say principally the industrialized countries, unless the governments and the responsible authorities of those countries are able to convince their public opinion and their parliaments of the useful nature of this policy, and to do so by exhibiting the efforts already being

made by the countries which are to receive it and which are ready and willing to make the best possible use of it.

In sum one must not try to compare the internal effort with the outside contribution just if they are contradictory factors, but rather consider them as complementary to one another, the latter being the indispensable extension and reinforcement of the former.

In relying on their own strength our colleagues in the developing countries will learn that in this spirit exchange programmes will in the end be valuable to all parties involved.

Librarians in developed countries should also remind that all publications sent on exchange must be carefully selected. There is indeed a very natural tendency to increase quantities. For technical reasons, young libraries are not yet in a position to assimilate an unduly large number of additional publications ; if they attempt to do so, quality is in danger of being sacrified to quantity. Accordingly, one should keep permanently in touch with the exchange partner to ensure that both parties avoid sending publications which are not desired.

And here again the librarians in the developing countries must be aware of the important role they play. They should have in mind that cooperation in librarianship, as in other areas, is one of the most difficult activities man can undertake, and nobody should expect miracles. In an imperfect world there will always be a gap between hope and realization. They ought also to remember always that a good library service has tremendous potential for the economic and social good of the people and that in the developing world where resources-human, material and financial - are scarcest, its perfection is a necessity.

4. A fourth general problem, characteristic of developing countries rather than industrialized countries is that there is an inadequate indigenious book trade infrastructure to provide the expertise required for an efficient book purchase service for libraries, information centres, etc.

The reasons of the poorly developed document production and distribution system in some developing countries have been pointed out by J.S. Parker (9): "The local document production system - broadly speaking, authorship, printing and publishing - may be poorly developed, partly because low educational standards produce few authors, partly because a limited potential user population does not provide a large enough market, at least to support commercial publishing ... Even when the production side is well-developed - which is rarely the case in developing countries - the local document distribution - essentially bookselling, but including also legal deposit provision and other means of distribution - may be ineffective, making it difficult for libraries to obtain the documents they need, even when they know them to have been producted".

The industrialized countries should have these facts in mind when establishing their exchange programmes with developing countries. Especially now that the world financial crises tends to affect the exchange programmes adversely. I have been informed that more and more libraries are reviewing their exchange agreements so as to reach a near parity in the materials exchanged. We should however be aware that we are serving a noble code of ethics and accordingly base our exchanges on a certain amount of generosity and should not mind when often the pendulum of giving and receiving swings in the direction of the receiving library. A librarian should not be a conservator, a curator, he should be the exploiter of information par excellence.
Even if only a few publications are received in return, it should be remembered that these may acquire lasting historical value.

It should also be remembered that it has long been the practice of national libraries and similar bodies to arrange for the exchange of all or selected publications of their home government, with similar publications from other countries, and this has proved to be a very effective form of collection building. In view of the wide range of subjects covered by official publications, similar arrangements between institutions other than national libraries may be a fruitful way of increasing literature coverage, particularly for those countries where problems of foreign exchange exist.

Conventions concerning the international exchange of publications adopted by Unesco in 1958

The librarians of the developing countries should stimulate their governments to accept and take into consideration in cultural agreements the two Unesco Conventions of 1958 on the International Exchange of Publications and on the Exchange of Publications and Government Documents between States, adopted by the General Conference at its tenth session, Paris, 3 December 1958.

These two Conventions are the results of a long evolution. In the beginning exchange experts paid little attention to bi- or multilateral conventions. The opinion prevailed that direct contacts were much more effective and that the smooth flow of international exchange of publications was best served by direct and informal agreements between libraries, institutions, universities, academies, etc. However, the idea to conclude multilateral conventions gained more and more ground, and that in such a way that the Section on the Exchange of Publications submitted during the 43rd IFLA Council Meeting at Brussels 1977 following resolutions :

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Recognizing the importance of the international exchange of publications as an aid to achieving universal availability of publications (UAP) IFLA invited UNESCO :

1. to remind the governments of the member states of the reciprocal facilities available under the Exchange Conventions;
2. to ask them to consider signing Conventions where they have not already done so;
3. at the same time and in support of 1, to circulate to these governments literature illustrating the advantages of adhesion e.g. a pamphlet containing the texts of the Conventions and also a description of their relevance, based on the paper by V.Popov presented at the World Congress of Librarians in Brussels; (14)
4. to publish a version of this paper in the UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries and elsewhere as appropriate;
5. to conduct a study, in conjunction with the Section on the Exchange of Publications and possibly with the proposed IFLA Office for UAP, on the practical effects of the Exchange Conventions since 1958 on progress towards UAP.

The texts of the two Unesco Conventions can be found in the Handbook on the International Exchange of Publications. (10)

The Need of a National Publications Exchange Centre.

It should be pointed out that it is essential to set up a national publications exchange centre, at least where such a centre does not exist already. This would help us to attain the fundamental objectives laid down in Unesco's Constitution, which enjoins us to "maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge... by initiating methods of international co-operation calculated to give the people of all countries access to the printed and published materials produced by any of them".

I think that the role of a central exchange centre should be entrusted to the national library. Indeed the British report on university libraries published in 1967 gave a comprehensive list of the possible functions of national libraries, and pointed out that it ought to be i.a.: the centre of the country's international exchange service and the centre for the distribution of duplicate material.

I know that our colleagues of the national libraries in the developing countries have to deal with many problems, the principal being the creation of a central body to plan and oversee the integration and co-ordination of the activities of various types of library services in order to provide everybody with equal opportunity of access to the total information resource of the country.

It is however very important that the national library should also assume general responsibility for exchanges of publications, facilitate such exchanges between libraries, institutes and learned bodies and distribute foreign publications received in consignments, which are not addressed to particular readers.

In doing this it should develop its own exchange policy in association with other libraries of the country, and not seek to draw off all the talent to its own services. Before all the national library's policy must form part of the nation's overall information policy.

We in the industrialized countries may not forget that our colleagues in many African countries, and developing countries in general are aware of the urgent need there is to consider seriously ways in which their efforts could be harmonised and co-ordinated to avoid wastage, undue duplication and the resultant inaffectiveness in services.

They have besides to deal with many other problems, such as :

1. the promotion of education, the fight against illiteracy, etc. They are very frequently required, therefore, to undertake the tasks of a public library at the same time of a national library;
2. the necessity of effecting transfer of knowledge and information by using modern technology to record and transmit the original message to the next generation; necessity which is due to the fact that in some developing countries the intellectual records of the society are not necessarily in graphic form, but in oral and visual.

We should therefore never forget that in the developing countries, where thousands of homes are without water or sanitation, let alone electricity, telephones or television, we must take a realistic view and base our contacts firmly on an understanding of just how serious these obstacles are and just how difficult they are to overcome. A special effort should consequently be made to give the national library the means to perform the functions of a national exchange centre, which has now become a very complex matter.

Handbook on the International Exchange of Publications

In order to help colleagues in developing countries Unesco charged the IFLA Section on the Exchange of Publications to prepare a revision of the Handbook on the International Exchange of Publications (11).

The first edition (1950), edited by J.L. Dargent (Belgium), was a contribution by Unesco to the rehabilitation and development of libraries after the Second World War, and a confirmation of the importance of the exchange of publications for the free flow of information and ideas among nations. It was the first directory of exchange possibilities on a world-wide scale ever published.

The second edition (1956), edited by Gisela von Busse (Federal Republic of Germany), aimed at improving the exchange and distribution of publications available for exchange. The character of a directory was kept in Part Two, while the new Part One contained a practical guide on handling the international exchange of publications in its various forms.

The third edition (1964) enlarged and revised, also edited by Gisela von Busse, followed the arrangement and layout of the second edition, including information on the two conventions and guidance on the organization of a national exchange centre. It was published as an attempt to cover the increased production of scientific publications and to meet the ever-growing desire on the part of the scientists and of governments for an exchange of experiences in this field.

The fourth edition (1978) aims at providing :

a) a guide on the methodology, organization and management of the international exchange of publications by bringing up to date the text of the third edition and by tracing the developments of the last ten years, especially as regards international standardization and the part played by international organizations in promoting the exchange of publications;

b) a detailed up-to-date directory of exchange centres with a national responsibility, providing practical information on their activities and services, which will enable exchange services all over the world to establish contacts with appropriate exchange partners. Details of publications offered for exchange by individual institutions, which appeared in the three first editions, have been omitted from the fourth edition, since they can never be complete or fully up to date.

The Handbook on the International exchange which is published in an English, French and Spanish edition, is intended for the use of : a) librarians who want to set up an exchange centre, especially in developing countries;

b) exchange librarians who want to enlarge their knowledge;

c) students of library schools;

d) officers responsible for library work;

e) information officers and documentalists.

Letters for the International Exchange of Publications

Since libraries are faced with a rising demand for older out-of-print and for new non-trade publications as well as foreign books for which foreign currency may be scarce or unavailable, the scale of exchanges and of the correspondence involved is increasing. It is also more and more accepted that librarians need to communicate with foreign colleagues in languages they understand.

For this reason the IFLA Section on the Exchange of Publications prepared a letter-writer in five languages under the title of "Letters for the international exchange of publications. A guide to their composition in English, French, German, Russian and Spanish" (12).

This booklet containing the phrases essential to the writing of exchange letters is to be seen as a kind of supplement to the Handbook on the International Exchange of Publications. Whereas the background and practical handling of exchanges are described in the Handbook, actual implementation of the exchanges by communication between partners will be more easily effected by the guide. The authors also hope that their guide can be regarded as a modest contribution both to standardization in international librarianship and to improvement in the exchange of publications between the more developed and the hitherto less developed countries.

Improving exchanges through international cultural relations.

In Belgium many departments are actively involved in what I will call international cultural relations. These relations are no longer restricted to organizing an exhibition, a theatrical performance or a concert abroad. They have evolved from this narrow artistic sphere to embrace varied forms of interaction and co-operation in a number of areas, such as educational problems and teaching, artistic and literary culture, socio-cultural activities, information, scientific co-operation, aid in development. Such interaction and co-operation takes the form of cultural agreements, bilateral engagements between States in which Joint Commissions decide on the programmes within the framework of a specific financial undertaking.

In this field we librarians can suggest the responsible department how to act effectively when it has decided to act, for example in improving exchange of publications with developing countries.

I, of course, know that not all countries are tied by cultural agreements. I also know that the scope of cultural action is not restricted to the content of the agreements. Interaction and co-operation

can thus take place unilaterally and freely, on the sole initiative of a single country, unconnected with any equivalent reciprocal arrangements. And here again we can do something to recommend the department in charge, that funds will be made available to meet the cost of exchange of publications with developing countries.

In Belgium, as well as in other countries we have a whole range of areas and a serried network of relations involving all the vital sectors of society, making them of direct concern to all members of the government and to a number of public administrations. These international cultural relations have grown progressively in breadth and content. Similarly, the allocation of work has evolved gradually along pragmatic lines, according to whether this or that Department witnesses the affairs coming under its responsibility gradually being drawn into the sphere of international exchanges.

As you see there are several ways which can be used to improve exchanges with developing countries. But unfortunately a large proportion of Belgium's foreign cultural relations is in the hands of various bodies which are not coordinated in any way, each of which conducts its own policy independently and from its own narrow standpoint. Here again we, exchange librarians, should inform the departments involved what can be done in order to organize suitable contacts with foreign cultures and provide a vital stimulus in the process of mutual fecundation which, basically, constitutes the real significance of all international cultural exchanges. We should not forget that foreign cultural co-operation requires, today more than ever, a dynamic and carefully thought-out policy. And in this domain exchange experts can help in bringing about an overall concept policy that enhances the cultural image of their country.

The Belgian Foreign Affairs Department conducts some direct activities abroad, though these are restricted to traditional artistic events organised on a small scale and to a few exceptional ventures designed to emphasize, via our diplomatic and consular posts and our cultural attachés, that Belgium maintains a certain permanent cultural presence in the world. In this way publications are sometimes put at the disposal of libraries in developing countries. The result however is most of the time negative, because the executive set-up of these direct cultural activities has in most circumstances not been sufficiently planned and these activities do not help in pursuing a coordinated policy of cultural activities abroad. The coordinating role can perhaps be played by the National Exchange Centre in each country concerned.

We have in Belgium a National Unesco Commission, which was set up in 1948, but which unfortunately no longer corresponds to present-day needs and is consequently almost unable to fulfil its function, which is to act in an advisory capacity to the Belgian delegation attending Unesco General Conferences.

At present the six Ministries involved in Unesco affairs : the Foreign Minister, the two Ministers for National Education, the two Ministers for Culture and the Secretary of State for Scientific Policy are trying to restructure the National Unesco Commission.

In order to help in a small way this restructure the Belgian Service for International Exchange is trying to convince the Belgian Unesco Commission to defend before the Unesco General Conference the resolutions from the Vienna Conference (13). In this way it is hoped that the exchange of publications with our partners in the developing countries can be improved.

Conclusion

We have been warned, and rightly so, that what we now call the explosion of world literature is really but a splutter, and that the real explosion is still to come. With this in mind, and with the rapidly increasing costs of books and periodicals, librarians everywhere must relentlessly seek every opportunity to cooperate in the developing of the exchange of library materials.

It would also be advisable that a generous attitude should be adopted towards the international exchange of publications and that whenever possible, special funds should be earmarked for the purchase of publications for developing countries.

The developing countries are aware that as they go more deeply into their own culture, they come to appreciate foreign culture better. They are continuing to make great efforts to improve the situation and are fully aware of the problems and short-comings which are still hindering their cultural action.

Since knowledge has no boundaries, all countries should try to make the knowledge in their territories available to the rest of the world. It must be emphasized again and again that one of the ways of making one's own culture more widely known is to carry out regular and judiciously elected exchanges.

This paper has of course not the ambition to be complete. It only gives a few more suggestions than those already given in my papers presented at the Conference of European Experts on International Exchanges in Vienna (24-29 April 1972), at the 38th IFLA General Council Meeting in Budapest (28 August - 2 September 1972) and at the 44th IFLA General Council Meeting in Strbské Pleso (27 August - 2 September 1978). It are only suggestions which I can offer from my experience. Other and better may crop up from the audience and I conclude with the hope to get useful comment.

 Brussels, 1 June 1979

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